This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended): A method of personalizing voice messages to be used by a voice mail system ~~in interacting with a user based on information provided by the user in an interactive communication between the voice mail system and the user~~ comprising the steps of:

creating a plurality of sets of recorded messages, wherein each message ~~having~~ has a distinct mood, and wherein each set of said sets is identifiable by an agent, said sets being for interacting with the voice mail system; ~~and~~

presenting a user of the voice mail system with interactive inquiries to enable the user to identify the agent; and

selecting a recorded message from the plurality of sets of recorded messages based on the interactive inquiries between the user and the voice mail system, wherein said user ~~selects~~ identifies said set by choosing a particular agent message.

2. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of personalizing the selected recorded message responsive to the information provided by the user.

3. (Previously presented): The method of claim 2, wherein the distinct mood is created by modifying at least one of the following: the speed, dialect, and pitch of the selected recorded message.

4. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the creating step comprises automatically creating a set of recorded messages corresponding to the user's own voice and speech patterns using voice recognition.

5. (Currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises:

playing a sample of agent introduction messages from a plurality of the sets of recorded messages while waiting for ~~a selection~~ an identification entry from the user said

~~selection~~ identification to indicate a desired ~~selected~~ agent and therefore a set of messages associated with said desired ~~selected~~ agent;

affecting a recorded message responsive to the identification ~~selection~~ entry made by the user; and

affecting a recorded message based on a previous selection if no identification ~~selection~~ entry is made by the user.

6. (Previously presented): The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of confirming the selected recorded message by playing back to the user a confirmation message using the same mood as the selected message.

7. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises conducting an interview with the user to determine an appropriate selection based on responses given by the user.

8. (Presently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on ~~identification~~ an identity of the user by voice recognition.

9. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on identification of a calling number using ANI information contained in data received by the voice mail system.

10. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on identification of a calling number using Caller ID information.

11. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises selecting a recorded message for a person associated with an entry in an address book.

12. (Previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the selecting step comprises:

searching a database having entries for associations between voice patterns of users

identified by a voice recognition system and calling numbers according to ANI information

to find a match for a calling number;

searching the database to find a match for the user's voice pattern associated with a

matched calling number;

seeking confirmation from the user for a matched voice pattern using a previously

selected mood; and

selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on the matched voice pattern.

13. (Original): The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of adding a new entry in

the database for the user associating the calling number with the user's voice pattern if no

match is found.

14. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of sets of recorded messages are

used for system prompts to the user.

15. (Original): The method of claim 14, wherein the interactive inquiries between the user

and the voice mail system is determined by the system according to the user's competence in

interacting with the system.

16. (Original): The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of sets of recorded messages

differ in length and speed.

17. (Original): The method of claim 15, wherein the user's competence is determined by a

plurality of detection criteria monitored by the system.

18. (Original): The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion is the frequency at

which the user reaches a particular point in the system.

19. (Original): The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion is the errors made by

the user.

20. (Original): The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion is the long pauses of the system without user response at the same point in the system on consecutive calls.

21. (Currently amended): The method of claim 17, wherein a detection criterion is how quickly the user halts a message with <u>an identification</u> a selection.

22. (Original): The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of sets of recorded messages are used for making system-wide changes in level of messages for a particular user.

23. (Original): The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of sets of recorded messages are used for changing the system prompts at a local point in the system.

24. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the user is a subscriber of the voice mail system.

25. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the user is an outside caller.

26. (Currently amended): An apparatus for personalizing voice messages to be used by a voice mail system in interacting with a user based on information provided by the user in a communication between the voice mail system and the use comprising:
       an application module;
       a management module;
       a media module interconnected to the application module and the management module;
       a storage medium connected to the media module, the management module, and the application module;
       means for creating a plurality of sets of recorded messages according to distinct mood for each such set for interacting with the voice mail system each set being identifiable by an agent; and

<u>means for presenting a user of the voice mail system with interactive inquiries to enable the user to identify the agent, whereby a sample of messages from different agents is provided to said user; and</u>

means for selecting a recorded message from within areas of the plurality of sets of recorded messages based on <u>the</u> interactive inquiries between the user and the voice mail system whereby <u>the</u> ~~a sample of messages from different agents is provided to said user and wherein selection by a~~ user ~~selects~~ <u>identifies</u> the set identifiable by that agent.

27. (Original): The apparatus of claim 26, further comprising means for personalizing the selected recorded message responsive to the information provided by the user.

28. (Currently amended): The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the means for selecting comprises of:

means for playing a sample introduction message from a plurality of the sets of recorded message while waiting for a selection entry from the user;

means for affecting a recorded message responsive to the <u>identification</u> ~~selection~~ entry made by the user;

means for affecting a recorded message based on a previous selection if no <u>identification</u> ~~selection~~ entry is made by the user; and

means for confirming the selected recorded message by playing back to the user a confirmation message using another message from the same set using the same agent mood as the selected message.

29. (Original): The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the selecting means comprises of means for selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on identification of a calling number using ANI information contained in data received by the voice mail system.

30. (Original): The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the selecting means comprises of means for selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on identification of a calling number using Caller ID information.

31. (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the selecting means comprises of:

      means for searching a database having entries for associations between voice patterns of users identified by a voice recognition system and calling numbers according to ANI information to find a match for a calling number;

      means for searching the database to find a match for the user's voice pattern associated with a matched calling number;

      means for seeking confirmation from the user for a matched voice pattern using a previously selected mood;

      means for selecting a pre-determined recorded message based on the matched voice pattern; and

      means for adding a new entry in the database for the user associating the calling number with the user's voice pattern if no match is found.

32. (Currently amended):   A method of personalizing voice messages to be used by a voice mail system ~~in interacting with a user based on information provided by the user in an interactive communication between the voice mail system and the user~~ comprising the steps of:

      creating a plurality of sets of recorded messages, wherein each message ~~having~~ has distinct voice characteristics, and wherein each set of said sets is identifiable by an agent, said sets being for interacting with the voice mail system; ~~and~~

      presenting a user of the voice mail system with interactive inquiries to enable the user to identify the agent; and

      selecting a recorded message from the plurality of sets of recorded messages based on interactive inquiries between the user and the voice mail system, wherein said user identifies ~~selects~~ said set by choosing a particular agent message.

33. (Previously presented):   The method of claim 32, wherein said voice characteristics of said recorded messages include at least one of the following: speed of the voice, voice dialect, accent, language and pitch.

34. (Previously presented):   The method of claim 1, wherein said mood includes at least one of the following: happy serious, verbose, terse, temperamental, and good-natured.